Case 1:23-cv-01575-JLT-SAB Document 76 Filed 08/20/25 Page 1 of 12

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5 6	Attorneys for Plaintiffs Martha Zepeda Olivares, individually and on behalf of the Estate of Maximiliano Sosa, Jr. and Maximiliano Sosa, Sr.		
7			
8	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT		
9	FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA – FRESNO DIVISION		
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11	MARTHA ZEPEDA OLIVARES,	CASE NO. 1:23-cv-01575-JLT-SAB	
12	individually and on behalf of the ESTATE OF) MAXIMILIANO SOSA, JR.;	PLAINTIFFS' OPPOSITION TO	
13	MAXIMILIANO SOSA, SR.,	DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO DISMISS THE THIRD AMENDED COMPLAINT;	
14	Plaintiffs,) v.	RELATED REQUEST FOR JUDICIAL NOTICE; ALTERNATE REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO AMEND	
15)	Hearing Date: September 23, 2025	
16 17	CITY OF FRESNO; UNKNOWN LAW () ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, and DOES 1- 30 ()	Hearing Time: 9:00 a.m. Courtroom: 4 The Hon. Jennifer L. Thurston	
18	Defendants.	Complaint Filed: November 8, 2023 Trial Date: Not Set	
19	TO THE HONORABLE COURT:		
20	Plaintiffs Martha Zepeda Olivares, individually and on behalf of the Estate of		
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22	Maximiliano Sosa, Jr. and Maximiliano Sosa, Sr., through their counsel of record, hereby		
23	oppose the defendants' motion to dismiss the Third Amended Complaint. The defendants'		
24	motion should be denied because (1) the Fresno Superior Court has appointed plaintiff Martha		
25	Zepeda Olivarez administrator of the estate of her deceased son, and she is therefore the only		
26	party with standing to assert claims on behalf of the estate; (2) as a matter of law, parents have standing to assert wrongful death claims, and the facts specifying their standing do not need to		
	I standing to assert wrongrui death claims, and the	c racis specifying their standing do not need to	

be specifically pleaded in the complaint; (3) plaintiffs standing to assert 14th Amendment claims

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is adequately pleaded; and (4) the defendants seek improper reconsideration of the Court's prior order designating this case as the lead of the two related cases, and, since Ms. Zepeda Olivares is the proper representative of the estate, the proposed realignment of the two related cases would serve no purpose.

Accordingly, and as set more fully set forth herein, the defendants' motion should be denied. Alternatively, plaintiffs request leave to amend.

STANDARDS OF REVIEW

Generally, the federal system is one of notice pleading. Galbraith v. County of Santa Clara, 307 F.3d 1119, 1126 (2002). A pleading is only required to contain "a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief." Fed.R.Civ.P. 8(a). "Rule 8(a)'s simplified pleading standard applies to all civil actions, with limited exceptions." Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N. A., 534 U.S. 506, 512 (2002). The required "short and plain statement" must simply give the defendant fair notice of what the Plaintiff's claim is and the grounds upon which it rests." Swierkiewicz, 534 U.S. at 512. The Supreme Court has more recently clarified that a federal complaint must plead "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face." Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). A claim is plausible on its face "when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged." Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009). Even after Twombly and Ashcroft, however, a plaintiff need not plead a prima facie case in a complaint. Swierkiewicz, 534 U.S. at 514–515; see also Starr v. Baca, 652 F.3d 1202, 1216-1217 (9th Cir. 2011) (reaffirming Swierkiewicz's continuing validity). "The theory of the federal rules is that once notice-giving pleadings have been served, the parties are to conduct discovery in order to learn more about the underlying facts." Starr v. *Baca*, 652 F.3d at 1212.

Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), a claim may be dismissed because of the plaintiff's "failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted." Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6). A dismissal under Rule 12(b)(6) may be based on the lack of a cognizable legal theory

Qase 1:23-cv-01575-JLT-SAB Document 76 Filed 08/20/25 Page 3 of 12

or on the absence of sufficient facts alleged under a cognizable legal theory. Mollett v. Netflix, *Inc.*, 795F.3d 1062, 1065 (9th Cir. 2015). The district court's consideration of a Rule 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss is limited to considering the allegations in the complaint. Leite v. Crane Co., 749 F.3d 1117, 1121-22 (9th Cir. 2014); Wolfe v. Strankman, 392 F.3d 358, 362 (9th Cir. 2004). All of the complaint's factual allegations are taken as true, and the facts are construed in the light most favorable to the non-moving party. Marceau v. Blackfeet Hous. Auth., 540 F.3d 916, 919 (9th Cir. 2008). Except as otherwise required under the limited circumstances inapplicable here, facts need only be alleged generally, and the court must also assume that general allegations embrace the necessary, specific facts to support the claim. Smith v. Pacific Prop. & Dev. Corp., 358 F.3d 1097, 1106 (9th Cir. 2004). Thus, "for a complaint to survive a motion to dismiss, the non-conclusory 'factual content,' and reasonable inferences from that content, must be plausibly suggestive of a claim entitling the plaintiff to relief." Moss v. U.S. Secret Serv., 572 F.3d 962, 969 (9th Cir. 2009). The allegations made in a complaint must be both "sufficiently detailed to give fair notice to the opposing party of the nature of the claim so that the party may effectively defend against it" and "sufficiently plausible" such that "it is not unfair to require the opposing party to be subjected to the expense of discovery." Starr v. Baca, 633 F.3d 1191, 1204 (9th Cir. 2011).

Of course, a court considering a 12(b)(6) motion does not have "to accept as true allegations that are merely conclusory, unwarranted deductions of fact, or unreasonable inferences." *In re Gilead Scis. Sec. Litig.*, 536 F.3d1049, 1056-57 (9th Cir. 2008). Legal conclusions also need not be accepted. *Sprewell v. Golden State Warriors*, 266 F.3d 979, 988 (9th Cir. 2001). The Court also is not required to accept as true allegations that contradict exhibits attached to the Complaint or matters properly subject to judicial notice. *Seven Arts Filmed Entm't, Ltd. v. Content Media Corp. PLC*, 733 F.3d1251, 1254 (9th Cir. 2013).

Where a complaint or claim is dismissed, leave to amend generally is granted, unless further amendment would be futile. *See Chaset v. Fleer/Skybox Int'l*, 300F.3d 1083, 1087-1088 (9th Cir. 2002); *see also Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1127 (9th Cir. 2000) (if a court

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dismisses the complaint, it should grant leave to amend, unless it determines that the pleading could not possibly be cured by the allegation of other facts).

Courts may take judicial notice of proceedings in other courts. *U.S. ex rel Robinson* Rancheria Citizens Council v. Borneo, Inc., 971 F.2d 244, 248 (9th Cir. 1992) (citing St. Louis Baptist Temple, Inc. v. FDIC, 605 F.2d 1169 (10th Cir. 1979) ("[W]e 'may take notice of proceedings in other courts, both within and without the federal judicial system, if those proceedings have a direct relation to matters at issue.""). And more specifically, courts may take judicial notice of orders or decisions entered in any federal or state court. Holder v. Holder, 305 F.3d 854, 866 (9th Cir. 2002). In addition, a court may use judicial notice even at the 12(b)(6) stage to consider indisputable evidence on which the complaint necessarily relies. See Marder v. Lopez, 450 F.3d 445, 448 (9th Cir.2006). A court may treat such a document as "part of the complaint, and thus may assume that its contents are true for purposes of a motion to dismiss under Rule 12(b)(6)." United States v. Ritchie, 342 F.3d 903, 908 (9th Cir.2003).

ARGUMENT

I. Ms. Zepeda Olivares is the Administrator of Her Son's Estate

The defendants contend that these plaintiffs lack standing to represent the estate of Maximiliano Sosa, Jr. This is simply false. First, the Third Amended Complaint only alleges that plaintiff Martha Zepeda Olivares is the representative of the estate. DN 67, p. 2, ¶ 4. And that representation is confirmed by the June 14, 2024 Order of the Fresno Superior Court in Case No. 23CEPR01424 and the letters of administration issued the same day. *See* Exhibits 1 and 2 hereto, over which the plaintiffs request this Court take judicial notice pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 201. These orders were given to all parties well before this motion's filing.

Ms. Zepeda Olivares' status as the administrator of her deceased son's estate,¹ and her acting on behalf of that estate, precludes any other party, including an estate beneficiary, from purporting to act on behalf of the estate. Indeed, an executor of a will or the administrator of an intestate estate is the one authorized to maintain or defend an action on behalf of a probate

¹ Some cases refer to a "personal representative" rather than an estate administrator, but the terms are synonymous when there exists an administrator appointed by a probate court. *See* Cal. Probate Code § 58.

estate. *Smith v. Cimmet*, 199 Cal.App.4th 1381, 1391 (2011); *see also* Cal. Prob. Code, § 9820; Cal. Code Civ. Proc., § 369, subd. (a).) There are only limited circumstances where the beneficiary of the estate has standing to sue a third party to seek redress for an injury to the estate, typically when the estate administrator cannot or will not act. *See Bohn v. Smith*, 252 Cal.App.2d 678, 680-681 (1967). This is obviously not such a case, as the record shows these plaintiffs promptly instituted suit, even while the initial probate process was still pending, in order to attempt to preserve important evidence.

The defendants' motion is based on inapposite case authority that only applies when there is no court-appointed representative of an estate, and the estate is instead represented by a successor in interest. California Code of Civil Procedure § 377.30 specifically states: "A cause of action that survives the death of the person entitled to commence an action or proceeding passes to the decedent's successor in interest ... and an action may be commenced by the decedent's personal representative or, if none, by the decedent's successor in interest."

(Emphasis added). Plaintiffs do not dispute that the decedent's minor children are his heirs and successors in interest, but that does nothing to change the fact that Ms. Zepeda Olivares, their grandmother, has legal authority to pursue litigation on behalf of the decedent's estate. See FRCP 17(a)(1) (providing that an estate administrator may sue without joining the persons from whose benefit the action is brought).

Plaintiffs accordingly submit that the defendants' motion to dismiss in this regard is misdirected to the wrong parties purporting to represent the decedent's estate and should be denied. If the Court declines to judicially notice the state court orders, plaintiffs certainly can amend their pleading to include the same as exhibits.

II. Plaintiffs' Have Standing to Assert Wrongful Death Claims

The defendants contend that these plaintiffs "do not have standing under California law to bring wrongful death claims." DN 75, p. 14, line 2. The underlying premises, i.e., that parents of an adult child cannot have valid claims for wrongful death, or that the specific facts supporting their standing to assert such causes of action must be specifically alleged in the

Qase 1:23-cv-01575-JLT-SAB Document 76 Filed 08/20/25 Page 6 of 12

complaint to establish standing, are incorrect. Indeed, California Code of Civil Procedure § 377.60(b) provides that parents who were dependent on the decedent can sure for his wrongful death. For purposes of this provision, dependence refers to financial support. *See Hazelwood v. Hazelwood*, 57 Cal.App.3d 693, 697-698 (1976). However, financial dependence generally presents a question of fact that has to be "determined on a case-by-case basis." *Perry v. Medina*, 192 Cal.App.3d 603, 608 (1987). "No strict formula can be applied nor did the Legislature suggest a formula...." *Ibid.* Dependence can include a variety of aspects, including support for basic life necessities, or support for obtaining the things, such as shelter, clothing, food and medical treatment, which one cannot and should not do without." *Ibid.*

Since the parent plaintiffs' standing to assert wrongful death claims related to their deceased son does not present a legal impossibility, and we are at the pleading stage, the operative question is whether they are required to allege their standing with specificity. In other words, must the plaintiffs allege facts showing they ultimately will prevail on their claims just to establish standing? The answer is a resounding no. "The jurisdictional question of standing precedes, and does not require, analysis of the merits." *Maya v. Centex Corp.*, 658 F.3d 1060, 1068 (9th Cir. 2011) (quoting *Equity Lifestyle Props., Inc. v. Cnty. of San Luis Obispo*, 548 F.3d 1184, 1189 n.10 (9th Cir. 2008)). It is therefore possible that plaintiffs may file a civil action "without suffering dismissal for want of standing to sue," even if they are ultimately "[un]able to assert a cause of action successfully." *In re Facebook Privacy Litig.*, 791 F. Supp. 2d 705, 712 n.5 (N.D. Cal. 2011) (quoting *Doe v. Chao*, 540 U.S. 614, 624–25 (2004)). Standing to sue is not one of the matters that must be alleged specifically under FRCP 9, and under the authorities cited above, and the defendants' motion attacking the parent plaintiffs' standing must therefore be denied.

If the Court disagrees with this analysis, plaintiffs believe they can in good faith allege facts to support their standing to sue for wrongful death and request leave to amend. While the operative complaint is the Third Amended Complaint, this argument has never been raised by any of the defendants, all of whom are represented by the same counsel and have a unity of

interests, until now.

III. Plaintiffs' Familial Relationship Allegations Are Sufficient

In a somewhat insulting argument, especially since the parent plaintiffs have already been deposed, the defendants contend that they lack a sufficient connection to their deceased son to assert a 14th Amendment cause of action for deprivation of familial relations. However, the claim asserted by plaintiffs "protects those relationships, including family relationships, that *presuppose* 'deep attachments and commitments to the necessarily few other individuals with whom one shares not only a special community of thoughts, experiences, and beliefs but also distinctively personal aspects of one's life." *Lee v. City of Los Angeles*, 250 F.3d 668, 685 (9th Cir. 2001) (quoting *Board of Dir. v. Rotary Club*, 481 U.S. 537, 545 (1987)).

There are many decisions that have denied motions contending insufficient relationship allegations in this same context. *See, e.g., Johnson v. Bay Area Rapid Transit Dist.*, 724 F.3d 1159, 1169 (9th Cir. 2013) ("[I]n past cases, we have recognized a parent's right to a child's companionship without regard to the child's age.") (collecting cases); *Estate of Osuna v. Cty. of Stanislaus*, 392 F. Supp. 3d 1162, 1176 (E.D. Cal. 2019) ("As the wife and son of the decedent, [plaintiffs] possess constitutionally protected liberty interests in the companionship and society of their husband and father, respectively."); *Morales v. City of Delano*, 852 F. Supp. 2d 1253, 1273–74 (E.D. Cal. 2012) (finding that spouses and children possess a constitutional interest in familial companionship with their spouse and parents).

The authorities relied on by the defendants are unavailing and easily distinguishable. *Kirkpatrick v. Cnty. of Washoe*, 843 F.3d 784 (9th Cir. 2016), was a summary judgment appeal related to the termination of parental rights by a dependency court, and is of no support at this stage or in this context. *Wheeler v. City of Santa Clara*, 894 F. 3d 1046 (9th Cir. 2018), involved claims asserted by the former parents of a child adopted at birth, who had long ago lost all rights as parents under state law, and is also unhelpful to the defendants. Further, the "split of authority" discussed in the dissent in *Sinclair v. City of Seattle*, 61 F.4th 674 (9th Cir. 2023), is the split between the Ninth Circuit, which recognizes a right of parent-child familial association

Qase 1:23-cv-01575-JLT-SAB Document 76 Filed 08/20/25 Page 8 of 12

under the 14th Amendment, and the several federal appellate jurisdictions that do not. That decision is thus equally inapposite. Finally, the unpublished Central District of California decision cited by defendants, *Doe by & through Rodriguez v. Cnty. of Los Angeles*, 2020 WL 7773891 (C.D.Cal. Dec. 30, 2020), is a case brought by a child who did not have the decedent's name on her birth certificate, had not been included in the primary lawsuit related to the death of the decedent, but who brought her own subsequent action. Moreover, in that decision the district court apparently departed from the Ninth Circuit's holding in *Johnson v. Bay Area Rapid Transit Dist.*, 724 F.3d at 1169, without even acknowledging that presumably binding decision or citing any other authority for support. Indeed, there is actually *no* support for the proposition that rightful parents must specifically allege the existence of or damage to their relationship with their deceased adult child in order to survive the pleading stage. And this Court should not be the first to so hold.

Finally, the parent plaintiffs should very easily amend the Third Amended Complaint to add sufficient allegations, so any dismissal should be without prejudice.

IV. Defendants' Request to Realign These Two Related Cases is Spurious

The defendants last contend that, although the Court issued an order – pursuant to stipulation -- back on January 13, 2025 making this the lead of the two related cases and closing the higher numbered case (DN 46), it should reverse itself because of the merit of their current arguments. Those arguments, however, lack substantial merit, and there would be no reason for the Court to reorganize its docket as requested.

WHEREFORE, the defendants' arguments lack merit and their motion to dismiss should be denied. Alternatively, leave to amend is requested.

Dated: August 20, 2025	/s/ Kevin G. Little
	Kevin G. Little
	Attorneys for Plaintiffs Martha Zepeda Olivares,
	individually and on behalf of the Estate of
	Maximiliano Sosa, Jr. and Maximiliano Sosa, Sr.

EXHIBIT 1

	DE-140
ATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY (Name, state bar number, and address)	
Kevin G. Little 149818	
LAW OFFICE OF KEVIN G. LITTLE	559-242-2400
Post Office Box 8656	
Fresno CA 93747	6/14/2024
ATTORNEY FOR (Name): Petitioner Martha Zepeda	
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF FRI	ESNO FRESNO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
street address: 1130 "O" Street	By rlong
MAILING ADDRESS: 1130 "O" Street	DEPUTY
city and zip code: Fresno, 93721	RECEIVED
BRANCH NAME: B.F. Sisk Courthouse-Prob	3/7/2024 11:56 AM
ESTATE OF (Name):	FRESNO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
MAXIMILIANO SOSA JR.	By: Evanie Salinas Deputy
	DECEDENT
ORDER FOR PROBATE	CASE NUMBER:
ORDER Executor	22CEDD01424
APPOINTING Administrator with Will Anne	
Administrator X Specia	
Order Authorizing Independent Administration	
with full authority with limited auth	-
WARNING: THIS APPOINTMENT IS N	OT EFFECTIVE UNTIL LETTERS HAVE ISSUED.
1. Date of hearing: 05/08/2024 Time: 9:00 A	M Dept./Room: 97A Judge: Hon. Brian Arax
THE COURT FINDS	
2. a. All notices required by law have been given.	
b. Decedent died on (date):11/04/2023	
(1) X a resident of the California county named at	
(2) a nonresident of California and left an estate	e in the county named above.
c. Decedent died	
(1) X intestate	
(2) testate	
and decedent's will dated:	and each codicil dated:
was admitted to probate by Minute Order on (date): THE COURT ORDERS	
3. (Name): MARTHA ZEPEDA OLIVARES	
is appointed personal representative:	
a. executor of the decedent's will d.	special administrator
b. administrator with will annexed	(1) with general powers
c. X administrator	(2) with special powers as specified in Attachment 3d(2)
o administrator	(3) without notice of hearing
	(4) letters will expire on (date):
and letters shall issue on such if anti-	(7) [] IGUGIS WIII GAPITE OIT (UALE).
and letters shall issue on qualification. 4. a. Full authority is granted to administer the estate	e under the Independent Administration of Estates Act.
	e estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (there is no
	r exchange real property or (2) grant an option to purchase real property or
(3) borrow money with the loan secured by an er	
5. a. Bond is not required.	
b. Bond is fixed at: \$	to be furnished by an authorized surety company or as otherwise
provided by law.	to be furnished by an authorized surety company or as otherwise
	are ordered to be placed in a blocked account at (specify institution and
location):	are statista to be placed in a blocked account at (specify institution and
and receipts shall be filed. No withdrawals shall l	be made without a court order. Additional orders in Attachment 5c.
. —	ake possession of money or any other property without a specific court order.
6. X (Name): Steven Diebert	is appointed probate referee.
o (Name). Steven Diebert	is appointed probate reletee.
Date: 6/14/2024	W M
	JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
7. Number of pages attached:	SIGNATURE FOLLOWS LAST ATTACHMENT

EXHIBIT 2

MAILING ADDRESS: 1130 "O" Street	DEPOTY
CITY AND ZIP CODE: Fresno CA	93721
BRANCH NAME: B.F.Sisk Courthouse-Probate	RECEIVED
	3/7/2024 11:56 AM
ESTATE OF (Name):	FRESNO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
MAXIMILIANO SOSA JR.	By: Evanie Salinas, Deputy
	DECEDENT
LETTERS	CASE NUMBER:
	DMINISTRATION 23CEPR01424
	IAL ADMINISTRATION
LETTERS	AFFIRMATION
1 The last will of the decedent named above having	1. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR: No affirmation required
been proved, the court appoints (name):	(Prob. Code, § 7621(c)).
a. executor.	2. X INDIVIDUAL: I solemnly affirm that I will perform the
a executor.b administrator with will annexed.	
2. X The court appoints (name): Martha Zepeda Olivares	duties of personal representative according to law.
2. [22] The court appoints (name). The court appoints (name).	3. INSTITUTIONAL FIDUCIARY (name):
a x administrator of the decedent's estate.	3 INSTITUTIONAL FIDUCIART (Hame).
a.	I solemnly affirm that the institution will perform the
	duties of personal representative according to law.
 with the special powers specified in the Order for Probate. 	I make this affirmation for myself as an individual and
	on behalf of the institution as an officer.
(2) with the powers of a general	(Name and title):
administrator. (3) letters will expire on <i>(date)</i> :	(Ivame and ude).
(3) letters will expire on (date).	
3. X The personal representative is authorized to administer	
the estate under the Independent Administration of	
Estates Act	
with limited authority (no authority, without	4. Funnitari en (deta), porto (1900)
court supervision, to (1) sell or exchange real property	4. Executed on (date): 03/01/2024
or (2) grant an option to purchase real property or (3)	at <i>(place)</i> : Fresno , California
borrow money with the loan secured by an	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
encumbrance upon real property).	Mathe Benet Chivaras
4. The personal representative is not authorized to take	(S/GNATURE)
possession of money or any other property without a	CERTIFICATION
specific court order.	CERTIFICATION
·	I certify that this document is a correct copy of the original or
	file in my office and the letters issued the personal representa- tive appointed above have not been revoked, annulled, or set
WITNESS, clerk of the court, with seal of the court affixed.	
With 1200, old it of the bourt, with 36al of the bourt affixed.	aside, and are still in full force and effect.



Fresno

Date: 6/21/2024

Clerk, by

/s/ Randi Long (DEPUTY)



(SEAL)	Date:
	Clerk, by
	(DEPUTY)

